



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park
(A part of Waterton-Glacier
International Peace Park)

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First Weekend of Summer at Glacier National Park

Park Plows Nearing Logan Pass

WEST GLACIER, MONT. – During the first weekend of summer, visitors to Glacier National Park will find lush green conditions. Unlike many western states that are experiencing drought conditions and extreme fire hazards, Montana has received substantial moisture in recent weeks. The results have produced vibrant, lush vegetation and an abundance of new snow at high elevations. As snow melts in the high country, Glacier's alpine meadows and mountain slopes will soon be ablaze with a bounty of colorful wildflowers. Snow that fell east of the Continental Divide June 8 and 9 is melting and park visitor facilities are mostly free of snow.

With the onset of summer, park officials are pleased to announce that several ranger-naturalist led activities will be available on Saturday, June 22 in the Lake McDonald Valley. The full summer program of ranger-naturalist led activities gets underway on Sunday, June 23. Parkwide interpretive program offerings are listed and described in *The Glacier Explorer* (formerly *Nature with a Naturalist*). This bi-weekly National Park Service newspaper is available at all park visitor centers and ranger stations.

Most years, the Logan Pass section of the Going-to-the-Sun Road is open for vehicle traffic by this date; however, 8.5 feet of new snow has fallen at higher elevations in the last four weeks. This new heavy, wet snow has caused large slab avalanches on the higher stretches of the Sun Road during the last two weeks, thus causing a delay in getting Logan Pass cleared and open to the public. "More stable snow conditions this week have afforded park crews to make substantial plowing headway," stated interim park superintendent Pete Hart. "This has NOT been a 'business as usual' kind of spring opening. We are working our personnel as hard as we can, but we must continue to keep



safety as a top priority.” He added, “Our goal is to open the entire Sun Road as quickly as it can safely be accomplished.”

Today (Friday), the west side plowing crew is working into the annual snowdrift at the ‘Rim Rocks’ area approximately one-quarter mile below Logan Pass. The east side crew is currently pushing up from Lunch Creek to the ‘Big Drift,’ the annual 60-80 foot snow drift one quarter mile east of Logan Pass, from above Lunch Creek.


Plowing personnel will rest on Saturday and then resume their 10-hour plowing shifts on Sunday, June 23. Hart emphasized, “Our plowing crews are working long hours at an arduous and often difficult job in typically extreme weather conditions to clear Logan Pass and open the entire Sun Road as soon as they can.” Plowing began on the Sun Road in early April. In recent decades, the latest opening of Logan Pass was June 23 (both in 1991 and 1995); the latest opening of Logan Pass was on July 10, 1943. The earliest the entire road opened was May 16, 1987. Since its dedication July 15, 1933, the average opening date for Logan Pass is June 15th.

In anticipation of the upcoming weekend, park managers have made arrangements to maximize parking for visitors on the park’s west side where vehicle traffic is limited to Avalanche Creek. Additional day use overflow parking will be accommodated over the weekend at Avalanche Campground, which will temporarily not be available for camping. Normal campground operations will resume at Avalanche Campground beginning Monday, June 24.

Most other campgrounds are available at Glacier National Park. On the park’s west side, Apgar, Bowman Lake, Fish Creek, and Kintla Lake Campgrounds are all open. Logging and Quartz Creek Campgrounds are scheduled to open July 1. The southern portion of the Inside North Fork Road between Logging Creek and Fish Creek Campground is open for hiking and bicycling; however, users should be alert for trees on the road. East of the Continental Divide, all campgrounds are open, including Cut Bank, Many Glacier, Rising Sun, St. Mary, and Two Medicine Campground.

East of the Divide, the Sun Road is open for vehicle traffic to Jackson Glacier Overlook, a distance of 14 miles from St. Mary. Hikers and bikers can travel an additional two miles to Siyeh Bend. On the Sun Road’s west side, visitors may drive to Avalanche Creek, a distance of 16 miles from West Glacier. Bicyclists and pedestrians may again travel above the Loop to Bird Woman Falls Overlook, a distance of 10.5 miles beyond Avalanche Creek.

Non-motorized use is welcome on any of the park roads that are otherwise closed to motor vehicles or closed due to plowing or other hazards. Users are reminded to be alert for snow, ice, and rock fall



as well as for bears and other wildlife. Bicyclists and hikers are asked to stay on the right side of the roadway. Visitors are also reminded that when sections of park roads are closed to motorized vehicle use, and are utilized as trails, they are closed to all pets.

All visitor services and activities are available throughout the park and in neighboring communities. Updates will be provided as plowing progresses. Road and weather conditions are available by visiting the park's web site (www.nps.gov/glac/whatsnew.htm).

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Editor's Note: New digital images of the west side plowing crew's work near the Rim Rocks are anticipated Friday afternoon. Please contact the Public Affairs Office to obtain electronic files.